

(12) **United States Patent**
Bartlett et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,345,401 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **May 24, 2016**

(54) **HANDHELD VISION TESTER AND CALIBRATION THEREOF**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **14/690,110**

(22) Filed: **Apr. 17, 2015**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**
US 2015/0223680 A1 Aug. 13, 2015

Related U.S. Application Data

(62) Division of application No. 13/319,317, filed as application No. PCT/US2010/034086 on May 7, 2010, now Pat. No. 9,033,508.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/176,885, filed on May 9, 2009.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A61B 3/02 (2006.01)
A61B 3/032 (2006.01)
(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **A61B 3/032** (2013.01); **A61B 3/005** (2013.01); **A61B 3/0033** (2013.01);
(Continued)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC A61B 3/033; A61B 3/005; A61B 3/0066; A61B 3/02; A61B 3/024; A61B 3/028; A61B 3/032; A61B 3/18; A61B 3/185
USPC 351/210, 222-224, 233, 237, 246
See application file for complete search history.

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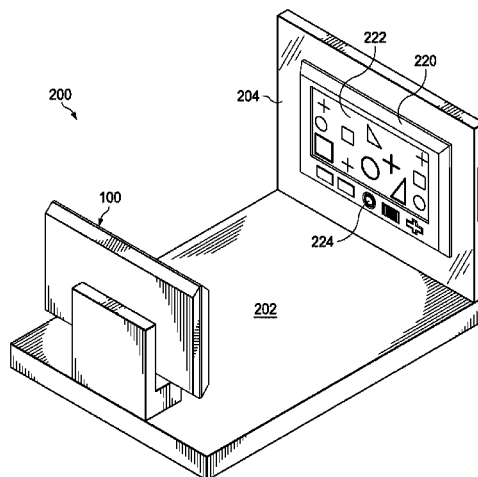
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Primary Examiner — Huy K Mai

(57) **ABSTRACT**

In one aspect, there is provided an embodiment of a calibration system for use with a vision tester having a display. In this particular embodiment, the calibration system comprises a calibration stand and a reflective surface. The calibration stand is configured to hold the vision tester. The reflective surface is coupled to the calibration stand and is oriented substantially parallel to the display. The calibration stand is configured to hold the display of the vision tester at a fixed distance from the reflective surface.

12 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



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- (52) **U.S. Cl.** FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS
CPC *A61B 3/0066* (2013.01); *A61B 3/0075*
(2013.01); *A61B 5/14532* (2013.01); *H04N*
5/351 (2013.01); *G09G 2380/08* (2013.01)

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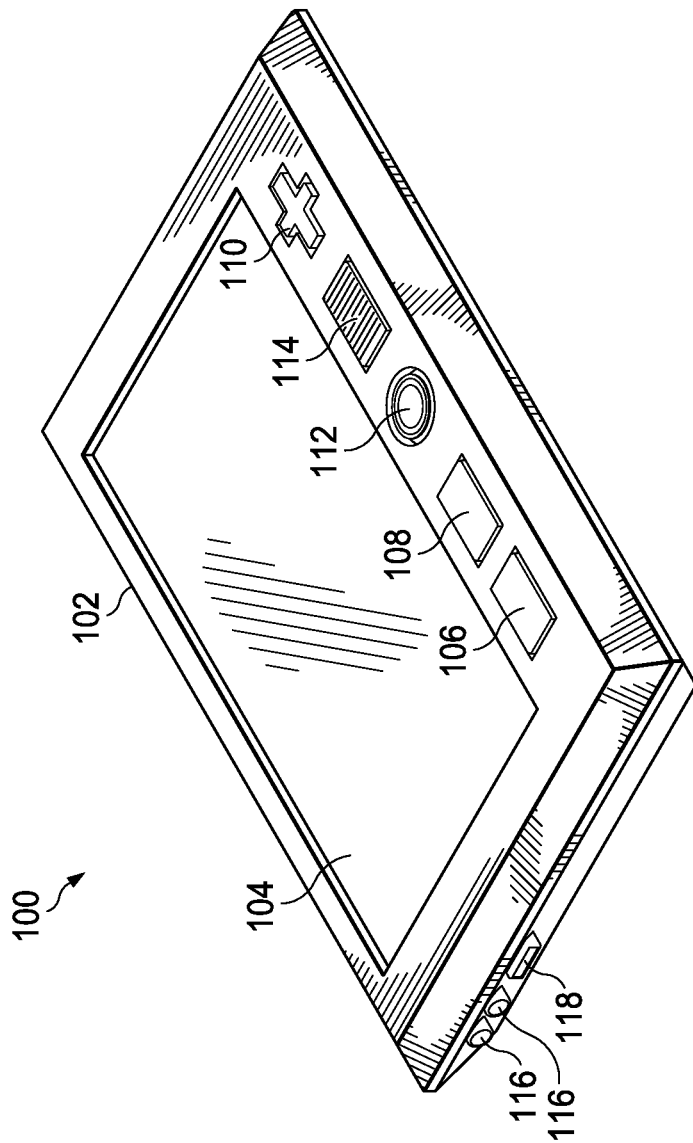


FIG. 1

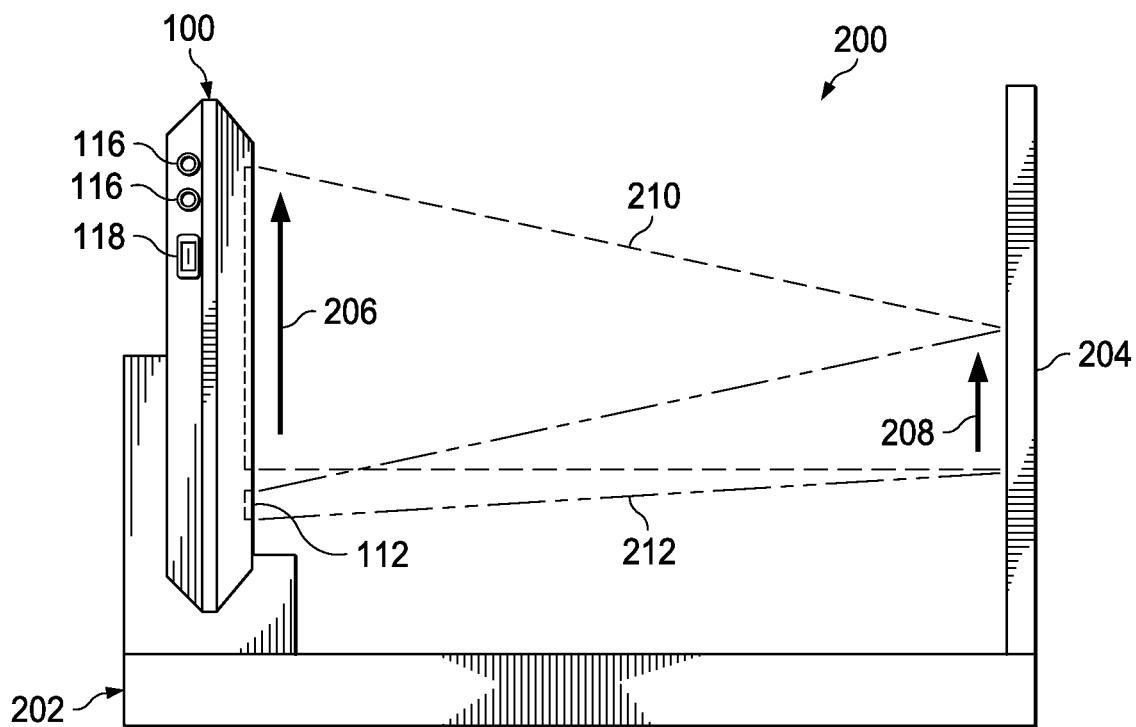


FIG. 2a

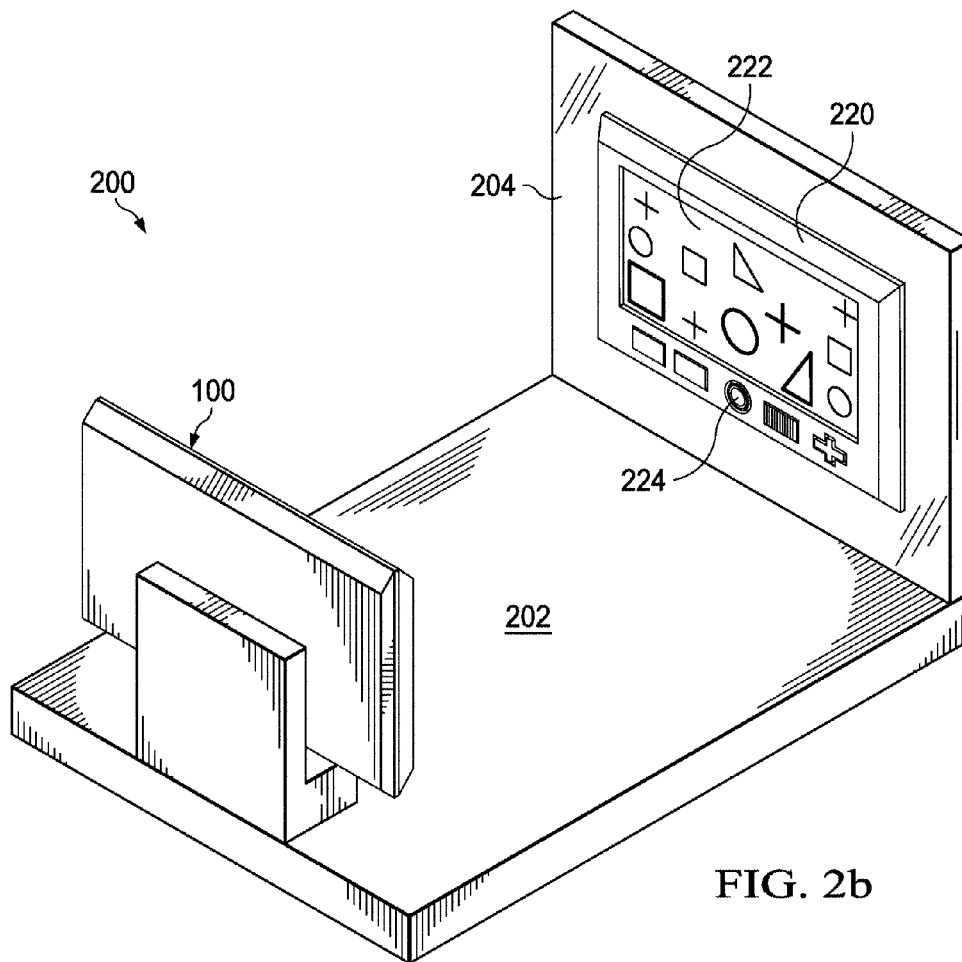


FIG. 2b

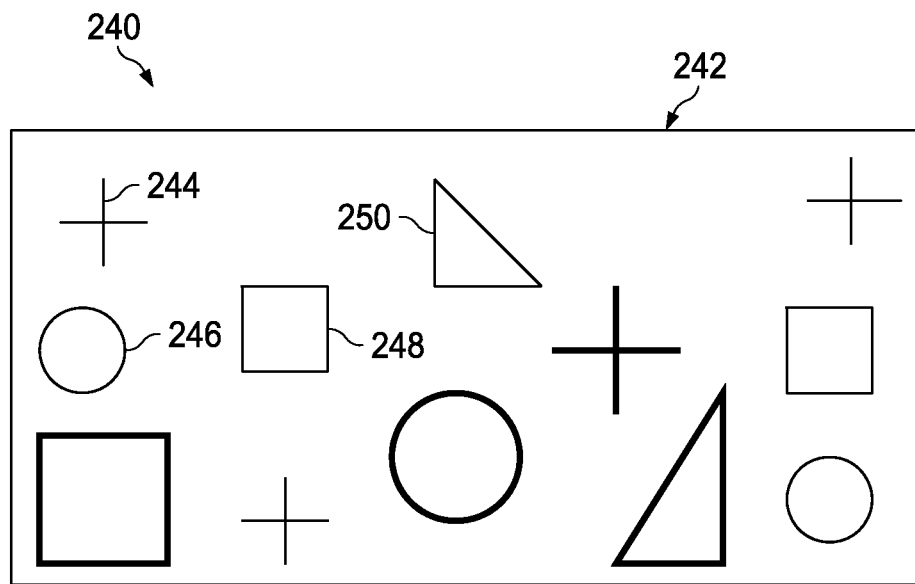


FIG. 2c

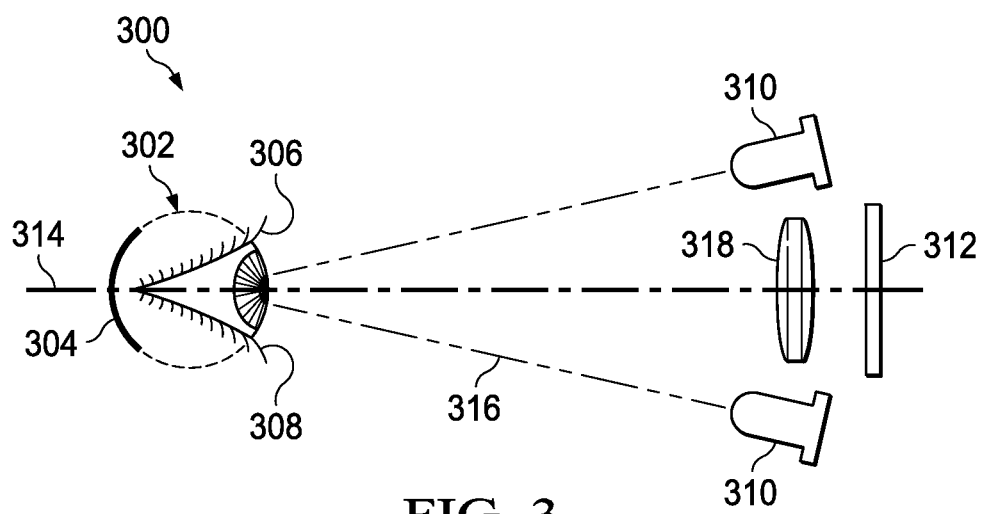


FIG. 3

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HANDHELD VISION TESTER AND CALIBRATION THEREOF

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a divisional of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/319,317 filed on Nov. 7, 2011, entitled "Handheld Vision Tester and Calibration Thereof", which is the National Stage of, and therefore claims the benefit of, International Application No. PCT/US2010/034086 filed on May 7, 2010, entitled "Handheld Vision Tester and Calibration Thereof," which was published in English under International Publication Number WO 2010/132305 on Nov. 18, 2010, and has a priority date of May 9, 2009 based on provisional application No. 61/176,885 filed by Michael Bartlett, et al. Both of the above applications are commonly assigned with this National Stage application and are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to techniques for the design and implementation of a vision testing system including calibration techniques.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Vision testing is normally carried out today either through observation of vision testing charts or through professional evaluation including imaging of the inside of the eye and other advanced diagnostic tools. Professional evaluation is effective in analyzing many vision disorders, but is expensive and may not be available in rural and remote areas. Observation of vision testing charts is effective, but is bulky and cumbersome as the charts are normally mounted on a wall and the test subject must observe them from some distance. While limited, use of vision testing charts and professional evaluations are effective for many common vision disorders such as focusing disorders. However, there are some vision diseases, such as diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration, and other vision diseases where ongoing monitoring of vision is critically important. Such diseases may become active at specific times and, if not treated, could result in irrecoverable vision loss or even blindness.

Consequently, a small and low-cost device that allows patients suffering from these diseases to conveniently monitor their vision is desirable. Techniques that help to ensure such a system operates properly so that it provides dependable test results are highly desirable. And additional techniques such as vision aids that help a patient in their daily life; electronic magnifier functions; auxiliary imaging and display systems; techniques to ensure the patient taking a test is the properly identified and is actively engaged; and other techniques to ensure accurate testing are also desirable.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

To address the above-discussed deficiencies of the prior art, in one embodiment, there is provided a calibration system for use with a vision tester having a display. In this particular embodiment, the calibration system comprises a calibration stand and a reflective surface. The calibration stand is configured to hold the vision tester. The reflective surface is coupled to the calibration stand and is oriented substantially parallel to

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the display. The calibration stand is configured to hold the display of the vision tester at a fixed distance from the reflective surface.

In another embodiment, there is provided a calibration system for use with a vision tester having a display. The calibration system comprises a reflective surface and a camera. The reflective surface is oriented and configured to reflect images displayed on the display of the vision tester. The camera is associated with the vision tester and is configured to allow the vision tester to employ the reflected images to calibrate and verify functionality of the vision tester.

The foregoing has outlined various features of the invention so that those skilled in the pertinent art may better understand the detailed description of the invention that follows. Additional features of the invention will be described hereinafter that form the subject of the claims of the invention. Those skilled in the pertinent art should appreciate that they can readily use the disclosed conception and specific embodiment as a basis for designing or modifying other structures for carrying out the same purposes of the invention. Those skilled in the pertinent art should also realize that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the scope of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a more complete understanding of the invention, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 shows a handheld device suitable for running a vision test;

FIG. 2a shows a handheld device mounted in a calibration stand;

FIG. 2b shows a perspective view of a handheld device mounted in a calibration stand;

FIG. 2c shows an image suitable for use for calibration; and

FIG. 3 shows a fundus imaging system

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In FIG. 1, an electronic handheld device 100 is shown. The handheld device 100 may include a case 102, a display 104, a cursor control 110, a fingerprint sensor 114, a camera 112, a first button 106, a second button 108, a power connector 116, and an interface port 118. The display 104 may include touch-screen capability so that the handheld device 100 can be controlled by touching the display 104 in pre-specified locations or manners within certain timeframes. The fingerprint sensor 114 allows the handheld device 100 to identify the person using it. The cursor control 110 is a button that may be pressed to move a cursor across the display 104 and position it in a desired location. Pressing the cursor control 110 may also be used to trigger operations and to control the handheld device 100. Alternative implementations of cursor controls include track balls, joysticks, touch pads, and other approaches may also be used in place of the cursor control 110 as shown in FIG. 1. The first button 106 and the second button 108 may be used to control the handheld device 100 and to operate functions of the handheld device 100. It is noted that the handheld device 100 may be operated through manipulation of the display 104 if a touch-screen capability is included, through the cursor control 110, through the fingerprint sensor 114, through the first button 106 and through the second button 108. Additional buttons and controls are possible including buttons and controls on the sides and back of the handheld device 100. It is also possible to include additional buttons, displays, and other forms of input devices.

The case **102** of the handheld device **100** may be constructed from metals, plastics, or other materials. While not shown in FIG. 1, the handheld device **100** may include removable panels on its front, back, or sides to allow batteries, memory cards, or optional accessories to be installed, connected, or removed. The power connector **116** allows the device to be powered from an external electrical power source that may supply AC or DC power to the handheld device **100**. The interface port **118** allows the handheld device **100** to be connected to an external host computer, external cameras, external calibration or test equipment, external accessories, or other systems or devices the user may desire to connect it to. It is also possible that the interface port **118** or the power connector **116** could be configured to supply battery power from the handheld device **100** to an external device or interface connected to them. The interface port **118** may be constructed from multiple physical interfaces and protocols. Some examples are Universal Serial Bus (USB), P1394, Ethernet, RS232, and many other possible interfaces. In addition to the interface port **118**, the handheld device **100** may include wireless connectivity. Bluetooth, IEEE802.11, Zigbee, and many other wireless communications protocols and radio electronics may be included in the handheld device **100**. The wired and or wireless connectivity of the handheld device **100** allows it to send information to a network service, host computer, or other computing device; and also allows for calibration, configuration, test protocols, software updates, and other useful information to be sent from a host computer or other data processing device or interface to the handheld device **100**. The procedure for allowing the handheld device **100** to either send data out over its wired or wireless interfaces or to receive information from other sources should normally include security features to ensure that the users information and privacy are not compromised and also to ensure that configuration, calibration, and other important factors of the handheld device **100** operation cannot be compromised illicitly or accidentally.

The camera **112** can be used to ensure that the same person is taking the test throughout the test sequence and an image of the user can be compared to images from past tests to help ensure that the person taking the test is indeed the correct person. The handheld device **100** can perform this operation by image analysis of an image or images provided from camera **112**. Additionally, the camera **112** can be used to check that the user is awake, upright, and appears to be capable and actively engaged in taking the vision test.

In addition to delivering vision tests to a user, the handheld device **100** can also serve as a vision aid to the user. The camera **112** can be used as a still image camera or as a video camera and allow the user to take images and then enlarge them on the display **104** so that they are easier to observe. In addition to enlarging the images, the handheld device **100** can also provide image or video processing capability to sharpen, detail, provide additional contrast, color tint, or otherwise alter the image or video sequence so that it is easier for the user to view it. Of course, additional cameras can be mounted on other parts of the handheld device **100** in addition or in place of the camera **112** shown in FIG. 1. For use as a vision aid, it may be beneficial, for example, to include a second camera on the handheld device **100** that points opposite the direction of the camera **112** shown (that is, this additional camera would point into the page in FIG. 1). Additionally, a camera can be mounted behind the display **104** in place of or in addition to the camera **112** shown in FIG. 1. The camera **112**, as shown in the embodiment of FIG. 1, may be beneficial in generating an "enhanced mirror" since it faces the user and can simply put the image it has generated on the display **104**

in an enlarged or enhanced view. Special cameras, such as night vision cameras, may also be included in the handheld device **100**. Of course, any other wavelength specific camera may be included in the handheld device **100**. In addition to displaying information, the handheld device **100** may also include image analysis capability to automatically recognize persons, places, or things by analyzing images taken from the handheld device's **100** camera (or cameras). It is also possible to add auxiliary displays to the handheld device **100** or to use the interface **118** or wireless connectivity to move images and/or video to an external video monitor. Auxiliary displays suitable for use with the handheld device **100** include LCD display panels, CRT displays, light processing display devices, head mounted displays, binocular display devices, virtual reality viewers, and many other types of displays. One example is use of the very small projectors that are now available and can be incorporated into small devices and allow images and video to be expanded for easy viewing. These small projectors are sometimes referred to as pico projectors. Such a pico projector may be physically integrated into the handheld device **100** or may be used as an external separate device connected to the handheld device **100** through a wired or wireless communication link.

The functions of the handheld device **100** shown in FIG. 1 may also be incorporated into electronic handheld devices that are already used for other functions. That is, the function delivered by the handheld device **100** may be implemented on a portable game console, a cellular phone, a personal digital assistant, a netbook computer, a notebook computer, a blood glucose meter, or many other electronic devices. The ability to combine many functions together into a single device allows for convenience for the user and also allows for beneficial combined functionality in some cases. For example, if the handheld device **100** of FIG. 1 includes the function of a glucometer (also known as a blood glucose meter), the user can record their blood glucose level when each vision test is taken so that a more complete record of vision capability and blood glucose can be generated. Of course, other biomedical measurements of a user could also be recorded, such as, but not limited to, blood pressure, heart rate, pupil dilation, iris color changes, eyelash growth, enzyme levels, etc. If the handheld device includes a positioning technology such as the Global Positioning System (GPS), the records of vision testing can be location stamped so that the user can more easily remember where they took each test and what the testing conditions were. Of course, the handheld device **100** can easily include calendar and clock functions so that test results may also be time and date stamped.

In FIG. 2a, a calibration stand **200** is shown with the handheld device **100** mounted in it. The calibration stand **200** comprises a base **202** and a mirror **204**. The calibration stand **200** positions the handheld device **100** at a fixed distance and orientation relative to the mirror **204** so that a test image **206** creates a reflection **208** that can be observed by the camera **112** (the camera is not explicitly visible in FIG. 2a, but it's relative position is clear from FIG. 1, so it is identified consistently by the numbering in FIG. 2a). Please note that the test image **206** and the reflection **208** are shown just in front of the handheld device **100** and the mirror **204** in the cross sectional view shown in FIG. 2a. Of course, they would in practice actually appear on the surface of the handheld device's **100** display **104** and, respectively, on the surface of the mirror **204**, but such a view is not possible in a cross sectional drawing. The handheld device **100** is inserted into the base **202** and a self-testing and calibration sequence is initiated by the user to ensure that the handheld device **100** is operating properly and can provide good quality measure-

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ments. The handheld device **100** can display a wide range of images and observe them back through its camera to ensure that the shape, color, contrast, size, and other aspects of the images are displayed as they should be. The calibration stand **200** is clearly desirable for such self-testing and self-calibration, but it is noted that this could be undertaken by simply holding the device in front of a reflective surface and initiating the self-testing and calibration sequence. Of course, given the potential for different distances, movement of the handheld device, and other factors, the use of a calibration stand **200** may be preferred.

The base **202** may be fabricated from metals, wood, plastics, or other materials. It may include features such as accurately formed surfaces, keyed openings, mechanical guides, and other features to keep the handheld device **100** accurately and consistently in place. The base **202** may also include fabrics, cushions, gaskets, felt linings, or other features to protect the handheld device **100** from being scratched or damaged when it is inserted and removed from the base **202**. And the base **202** may also include mechanical features that secure the handheld device **100** such as straps, clamps, snaps, buckles, or other features. The mirror **204** may be a glass mirror or may be made from polished metals, metal film laminated on plastics or other materials, or may be constructed in other ways to provide a substantially reflective surface. Normally, the mirror **204** would be constructed to be highly reflective of visible light, but in the case that it has limited reflectivity or inconsistent reflectivity for some wavelengths of light, the handheld device **100** may compensate for this limitation through adjustment factors included in its calibration routine. Similarly, if the camera **112** provides higher sensitivity to some wavelengths of light, the handheld device **100** may compensate for it with information about the cameras **112** sensitivity as a function of wavelength.

In another embodiment, the base **202** of calibration stand **200** could include an auxiliary camera in place of mirror **204**. In this embodiment, the auxiliary camera would be oriented toward the display of handheld device **100** such that test image **206** is captured by the auxiliary camera. The auxiliary camera could interface with handheld device **100** for calibration purposes or could interface with an external device to analyze calibration of the handheld tester.

The handheld device **100** may keep track of calendar dates and times and require that it be operated through its self-testing and calibration sequence on a regular basis. The user may be reminded electronically of the need for this with visible, audible, or other signals or messages. The handheld device **100** may refuse to operate and collect user test results if it has not been acceptably self-tested and calibrated within a sufficient time interval. Further, if the handheld device **100** detects that it has possibly been modified, the case **102** has been opened, high levels of mechanical shock or acceleration have been measured, or other factors are present that bring the proper condition of the device into question; the handheld device **100** may demand that the user run the self-testing and calibration sequence with acceptable results before further testing takes place.

FIG. **2b** shows a perspective view of a handheld device **100** mounted in a calibration stand **200** including a base **202** and mirror **204**. This view is shown to avoid any confusion related to the similar view of a handheld device **100** in a calibration stand **200** shown in FIG. **2a**. On the mirror **204**, a reflection **220** of the handheld device **100** is visible. This reflection **220** may be analyzed as already described with regard to FIG. **2a** by using the camera **112** to create an image of the reflection **220** and use of data processing functions in the handheld device **100** to analyze the calibration image **222** visible in the

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reflection **220**. Note that the camera **112** is not actually visible in FIG. **2b**, but the camera reflection **224** of camera **112** is visible. The generation of a calibration image **222** will be discussed next with regard to FIG. **2c**.

FIG. **2c** shows a calibration image **240** that may be used for calibration and testing of the handheld device **100** either through use of the calibration stand **200** or with a reflective surface as described above. In the course of testing and calibrating the handheld device **100**, a calibration image **240** is displayed on the display **104** and the reflection of the calibration image **240** is observed with a camera **112**. A very wide variety of calibration images **240** may be used. The calibration image **240** shown in FIG. **2c** includes crosses **244**, circles **246**, squares **248**, and triangles **250** inside display boundary **242**. The shapes shown in the calibration image **240** are shown in black and white for convenience. However, a very wide variety of shapes, images, features, shadings, textures, colors, line weights, and other aspects may be used in an image for calibration and handheld device **100** testing purposes. For example, rectangles, wavy lines, ellipses, trapezoids, and very many other shapes and images displayed in all possible colors, shadings, brightness levels, and other factors may be used as test images or as part of a test image. And, in addition to stationary images, moving images and video images may be used. Many standard video and image calibration charts may also be used.

FIG. **3** shows a fundus imaging system **300**. A cross section of an eyeball **302** and a schematic of how illumination might be applied so that fundus photos of the retina **304** may be taken are shown. Fundus photography is widely used to take images of the retina **304** of the eyeball **302**. Fundus photos are taken by using special lighting systems to illuminate the inside of the eye and to then take a photograph of the retina **304** through the pupil of the eyeball **302**. In FIG. **3**, light emitting diodes **310** are shown to illuminate the inside of the eye. Other lighting techniques are possible such as scanning lasers, incandescent bulbs, and other techniques. Light emitting diodes **310** are presently preferred for their small size, low cost, and high efficiency. While only two light emitting diodes **310** are shown in FIG. **3**, the actual embodiment might include a full circle of light emitting diodes **310** around the lens **318** and imager **312**. Many possible forms of the camera **112** of the handheld device **100** are possible, but most are based on a simple lens **318** and imager **312**. Many types of imagers such as CMOS image sensors, CCD (Charge Coupled Device) imagers, and other imagers may be used. Also, the lens **318** may be a fixed lens or a variable focal length lens and may be formed from glass, plastic, or other possible materials. It is noted that the camera function made up of the lens **318** and imager **312** may be those of the camera **112** shown in FIG. **1** or may be a separate camera mounted in the handheld device **100** or may be a separate camera that is connected electronically or can pass its image to the handheld device **100**. FIG. **3** also includes a schematic feature of the upper eyelash **306**, the lower eyelash **308**, a diagram center line **314**, and illumination reference lines **316**.

The addition of a fundus imaging system **300** to the handheld device **100** opens the possibility to couple analysis of an image of the retina **304** with the results of vision testing. If areas of the vision field are determined to show distortion, reduced clarity, limited acuity, or other effects, these can be compared to areas of the retina corresponding to that area of the vision field. In this way, automated or professional analysis of the fundus image can include additional attention in areas where the vision field showed limited or poor performance. And, in a reverse fashion, areas of the fundus image that show signs of eye disease can be given additional atten-

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tion in the automated vision testing. The combination of both vision testing and fundus image analysis is novel and is a key aspect of some possible embodiments of this invention.

Although the description above contains many specificities, these should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention, but as merely providing illustrations of some of the presently preferred embodiments of this invention. Thus the scope of the present invention should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents, rather than by the examples given. Those skilled in the art to which this application relates will appreciate that other and further additions, deletions, substitutions and modifications may be made to the described embodiments.

What is claimed is:

1. A calibration system for use with a vision tester having a display, comprising:

a calibration stand configured to hold said vision tester; and
a reflective surface coupled to said calibration stand and oriented substantially parallel to said display, said stand configured to hold said display at a fixed distance from said reflective surface.

2. The calibration system as recited in claim 1 wherein said reflective surface is configured to reflect images displayed on said display to a camera of said vision tester to allow said vision tester to employ said reflected images to calibrate and verify functionality of said vision tester.

3. The calibration system as recited in claim 2 wherein said images include varying colors, shapes and brightness.

4. The calibration system as recited in claim 2 wherein said images include calibration images.

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5. The calibration system as recited in claim 2 wherein said images move.

6. The calibration system as recited in claim 1 wherein said vision tester includes calendar functions configured to remind a user to employ said calibration system to calibrate and verify functionality of said vision tester.

7. The calibration system as recited in claim 1 further comprising at least one security feature configured to protect information and privacy.

8. The calibration system as recited in claim 1 wherein said vision tester includes damage assessment functions configured to prompt a user to employ said calibration system to calibrate and verify functionality of said vision tester.

9. The calibration system as recited in claim 1 further comprising an auxiliary camera configured to capture an image.

10. The calibration system as recited in claim 9 wherein said auxiliary camera is configured to communicate with said vision tester.

11. The calibration system as recited in claim 9 wherein said auxiliary camera is configured to communicate with an external device.

12. A calibration system for use with a vision tester having a display, comprising:

a reflective surface oriented and configured to reflect images displayed on said display; and

a camera associated with said vision tester and configured to allow said vision tester to employ said reflected images to calibrate and verify functionality of said vision tester.

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